

REPORT OF THE LAND AND WATER USE CONFERENCE

March 26 and 27, 1977

Sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Eastern Sierra through grant funds provided by the California Council for the Humanities in Public Policy, The National Endowment for the Humanities and Inland Counties Health Systems Agency.

SECTION I: EVALUATION

The general attitude of those responding to the Saturday (first day) conference evaluation form was positive. Thirty-five of the forty-three (81%) responding liked the format for the program. Several indicated that the program was felt to be well coordinated and highly motivational and almost all of the evaluations were overwhelmingly positive. Twelve persons (28%) indicated that the program expanded their perspective. Similar positive comments were that the panelists and experts did an excellent job: they presented their topics well. A number of suggestions were made to invite panelists back for a lecture series. The information presented on Indian culture and aesthetics affected many panelists as well as the audience. The program encouraged public participation through interaction of panelists and audience.

Some criticisms were: six persons indicated that there should have been more question and answer time and that the panelists should have had more time for making their presentation, four persons stated that fewer panelists would have been more effective, allowing greater time for those remaining, and three felt that a hydrologist on one of the panels would have been helpful.

There seemed to be mixed feelings and opinions as to which panels were the most interesting and beneficial. Several persons wrote that all panels were excellent and that all panels had highlights. Some preferred the historical perspective and others the philosophical and future projections panel. The "Who's in Charge Here" panel was probably the most interesting to local residents since it specifically dealt with a local problem. Other single comments worth noting are: having a better loudspeaker, the City of Los Angeles and the Dept. of Water and Power should have sent top officials, there should have been more

emphasis on aesthetics and the Mono Lake issue should have been addressed. Nearly every evaluation of the Saturday conference felt that it had been a most beneficial and informative event.

The goals of the conference were to provide new information to the community and to arrive at a consensus. The impact of Saturday's experiences and Sunday morning's tours carried over to the Sunday afternoon program. The participants wanted the Sunday afternoon program to be successful. With good humor and patience they struggled to complete the afternoon exercises. Evaluation forms (28 received) qualified the criticisms with an acknowledgment of the complexity of the program. Some of those responding to the Sunday afternoon evaluation forms cited a need for more structure, a need for more time to set priorities and a need to establish priority setting workshops.

One of the valuable exercises of the afternoon was the time spent listening and questioning the resource panelists. In addition, most of the people thought the brainstorming exercise was worthwhile. Comments such as, "It got my creative juices flowing." were the general tone. In order to identify the issues at the beginning of the Sunday afternoon program, a group of eighty persons chose twelve general headings which were then consolidated and refined into five main issues or topics. These were: 1) quality of life, 2) decision making, 3) economic viability, 4) base line data and master planning, and 5) priorities for water use.

The priority setting exercise was unwieldy and confusing. For each main issue or topic there were two groups of people that brainstormed possible solutions and areas of concern. These solutions and concerns were not to be given priorities because that would occur in the voting exercise. Their findings were reported back to the entire group. These findings became the priority alternatives which were consolidated and refined into statements upon which everyone voted.

In reading the criticisms, one idea manifested itself in two ways. Eleven persons (40%) said that they were not happy with the priority setting process. Eleven others were unhappy with the voting process. Twelve persons thought that the afternoon exercises were too long. A constructive suggestion was to use an overhead projector as a visual aid during the exercises. This would have clarified and expedited the priority setting. Four evaluations mentioned that the format was confusing. Three evaluators thought that they should have had access to all six resource panels. Criticisms mentioned by only one respondent were: the program was too ambitious, there should have been more representation on the resource panels and a stronger leader was needed.

SECTION II: SUMMARY

Because the process was complex, the validity of the conclusions will need to be weighed carefully. In spite of these shortcomings, the participants did identify and vote for their concerns and priorities in order to create guidelines for future actions in the valley communities. After reviewing the results of the voting, those priority alternatives receiving overwhelming voting support were:

- Concern for the environment,

- Concern for communication processes,

- Economic independence from Los Angeles's influence in order to increase economic security, and

- The use of water for the environment first, followed by domestic uses, then water for recreation and tourism.

Analysis and interpretation of all the identified priority alternatives revealed that often there was a main goal supported by specific means to achieve that goal. When we read through the priority alternatives we identified many recommendations recurring and over-lapping.

Concern for the environment included preservation and enhancement of the environment, identification of and planning within the capacity of the land, restoration of the natural habitat and water use for those cited priorities.

The communication processes encompassed the gathering and dissemination of all kinds of information through existing and new groups and existing and new processes. These groups and processes included liason groups, lobby groups, citizen groups, advisory groups as well as competitive media including more and varied information, better dissemination of information expressed in terms lay people can understand. Economic independence from Los Angeles's influence included review of tax assessments, leases and investment procedures, examination of transportation modes, expansions of the tax base and encouragement of new businesses. Water use priorities included the need to restore the natural habitat to some acceptable former level and the need to use water for present and future domestic and economic needs.

The following are the reports from the brainstorming groups. It should be noted that as the afternoon wore on, the spokesman for each group edited out duplication in order to facilitate the consolidation process. Some of the statements may have been ambiguous, however time for clarification was not available.

IDENTIFYING THE ISSUES - BRAINSTORMING

1. Decisions making - local participation
2. Autonomy - local
3. Greening of the valley - restoration What alternatives?
4. Population control - planning for limited growth
5. Complete master plan - use of public lands
6. Quality of life
7. Open communication between people
8. Multiple uses of water
9. Base line information
10. Economic viability
11. Lobby group - independent education
12. Ethics and equitable distribution of resources

TOPICS OR ISSUES - CONSOLIDATION

1. Quality of life
2. Decision making
3. Economic viability
4. Base line data and master planning
5. Priorities for water use

FOR A COPY OF THE CONFERENCE TRANSCRIPT:

Remit \$4.75 Payable to: The League of Women Voters of Eastern Sierra
P.O. Box 1496 Bishop, Ca 93514

QUALITY OF LIFE

Brainstorming - Group 1

1. Value system as a social mechanism
 - a. Clarification
 - b. Coordination and cooperation
 - c. Continuity of processes
 - d. Planning
2. Quality of life for the future (100 years plus)
 - a. Preservation and enhancement (optimizing conditions and actions)
 - b. Capacity of the land
 - c. Health continuums (physical, mental social and environmental)

Brainstorming - Group 2

1. Living within your resources and demanding population control
2. Do not encourage people to come to the Owens Valley who do not have jobs
3. Maintain open spaces
4. Maintenance of air quality and water quality
5. Maintaining the condition of the natural renewable resources
 - a. Marshes to restoration
 - b. Natural plant communities
 - c. Fish and other wildlife
6. Economic development - even agriculture must meet the standards for the quality of life previously mentioned

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS

VOTES

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 167 | Preservation and enhancement of the environment (maintaining and improving the condition of the resources) |
| 146 | Capacity of the land |
| 84 | Economic development |
| 66 | Value system |
| 44 | Health |

DECISION MAKING

Brainstorming - Group 1

1. New governmental entity to communicate between government and citizens
2. Taking personal responsibility for input of existing agencies
3. Need for additional communication - competitive newspaper, radio

Brainstorming - Group 2

1. Obtain all pertinent information
2. Citizens lobby - representation by citizens groups for particular interests.
3. Liason groups - citizens advisory committee - pass information to decision makers
4. Owens Valley member as voting member of the DWP Commission
5. Objective evaluation of information - determine possible consequences

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS

VOTES

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 97 | Create a new entity as impartial liason group(s) |
| 116 | Voting representative on the DWP Board of Commissioners from the Owens Valley |
| 137 | Gather and disseminate information through the competitive media in order to obtain all pertinent information |
| 74 | Creation of a pressure group for citizen input and lobbying |
| 49 | Determine the consequences of alternative actions, evaluate the information |
| 39 | Identify the decision makers |

ECONOMIC VIABILITY

Brainstorming - Group 1

1. Security of life and property - Independent of Los Angeles's control
 - a. Leases
 - b. Security of investment
 - c. High value - low bulk industry (electronics, jewelry manufacture)
 - d. Ranchers have firm water supply
2. Appeal the present tax assessment for DIP land
3. Better transportation
 - a. Railroad
 - b. Trucking
4. Zoning update
5. County owned airport for controlled commercial development
6. Control our own land and water use

Brainstorming - Group 2

1. Expansion of educational opportunities
 - a. Vocational
 - b. Educational (environmental)
2. Expansion of tax base encouraging new businesses - high value - low bulk
3. Encouragement of economic atmosphere which allows for the return of young people
4. Establishment of special districts, either county wide or regional
 - a. Economic planning
 - b. Recreational planning
 - c. Educational planning

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS

VOTES

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 250 | Independence from Los Angeles - security of life and property |
| 67 | Appeal present tax assessment for DIP land |
| 45 | Better transportation |
| 14 | County owned airport |
| 0 | Expansion of educational opportunities |
| 43 | Expansion of tax base and new businesses - high value - low bulk |
| 22 | Encouragement of economic atmosphere for return of young persons |
| 12 | Establishment of special districts either countywide or regional |

MASTER PLANNING AND BASE LINE DATA

Brainstorming - Group 1

1. Consortium of county governments to include Inyo County
2. Establishment of goals
 - a. Communicate with all factions
 - b. Consider long and short term consequences
 - c. Consider means of gathering information
 - d. Consider who will make the final decisions
3. Apply for finances

Brainstroming - Group 2

1. Include people, animals and plants in the plan
2. Baseline information
 - a. Use existing data
 - b. Generate new information
3. Identify existing groups and form a regional representative overseer and consortium of county governments - insure that planning is consulted
4. Assure full public participation by newsletter or digest in layman's terms

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS

VOTES

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 160 | Establish goals (as elaborated above) |
| 46 | Apply for finances |
| 50 | Include people, animals and plants |
| 68 | Baseline information |
| 43 | Identify existing groups and form a representative overseer or consortium |
| 62 | Assure full public participation with layman's terms - publication of information |

PRIORITIES FOR WATER USE

Brainstorming - Group 1

1. Recreation and tourism
2. Agriculture
3. Domestic
4. Restore the natural habitat to some acceptable former level
5. Maximize personal choice of water available

Brainstorming - Group 2

1. Water storage for future generations
2. Export
3. Local recreation
4. Industrial

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS

VOTES

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 87 | Recreation and tourism |
| 67 | Agriculture |
| 92 | Domestic |
| 119 | Restore the natural habitat to some acceptable former level |
| 13 | Maximize personal choice of water available |
| 45 | Water storage for future generations |
| 4 | Export |
| 2 | Local recreation |
| 11 | Industrial |

PRIORITIES FOR WATER USE

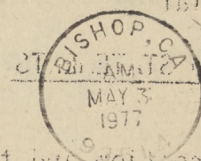
level of water available

level of water available

level of water available

level of water available

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